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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/228 B of 5 April 1994, in authorizing the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the amount of $1,270,000 in connection with the establishment of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, requested a comprehensive report on the substantive roles to be played and the goals to be achieved by the United Nations system, the coordinating role of the United Nations and all practical measures that are necessary to ensure a unified and coherent approach in the provision of economic, social and other assistance in the occupied territories.

2. The Middle East peace negotiations, including the bilateral talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization that led to the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) on 13 September 1993, and the more recent implementation agreement on Gaza and Jericho signed at Cairo on 4 May 1994, have been taking place outside the framework of the United Nations. Since September, the Secretary-General has held several meetings with senior Palestinian and Israeli officials, who briefed him on general progress in their discussions. At the same time, because the United Nations was not involved and the negotiations were highly confidential, it was not possible to predict with accuracy when the implementation of the Declaration of Principles would begin or to assess in detail what would be required of the United Nations system thereafter. As it turned out, the agreement on Gaza and Jericho was signed several months later than envisaged in the Declaration of Principles. A copy of the agreement, which is some 200 pages long, was officially conveyed to the Secretary-General by the United States of America, the Russian Federation, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 27 May 1994 and will be issued as an official document under the symbol A/49/180-S/1994/727.

3. In these circumstances, the Secretary-General refrained from appointing the Special Coordinator until implementation of the Declaration of Principles was under way. On 25 May 1994, following consultation with the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel, he announced the appointment of Ambassador Terje Roed Larsen of Norway as Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories. That decision was welcomed by the concerned parties, as well as by donors, who paid tribute to Mr. Larsen's role in an earlier capacity in facilitating negotiation of the Declaration of Principles of 13 September 1993 and the implementation agreement of 4 May 1994. His long experience in the field of economic and social development, his detailed knowledge of both agreements and his excellent relations with the parties should provide added impetus to United Nations efforts to provide economic, social and other assistance to the occupied territories in a well-coordinated and efficient manner.

4. The circumstances faced by the United Nations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are unique and without parallel in the history of the Organization. In a situation where, for 27 years, an occupying Power has exercised control over all aspects of Palestinian life in the territories, the traditional United Nations coordinating mechanisms have not been applicable. In fact, throughout the period, with few exceptions, the Israeli authorities did not permit United Nations programmes and agencies to operate in the occupied territories. The principal exception was the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which had been present in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1950 and which, in accordance with letters signed in June 1967 by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and the Political Adviser to the Foreign Minister of Israel, was able to continue its assistance to Palestine refugees in these areas. UNRWA has today by far the largest United Nations programme in the occupied territories, with a budget in 1993 of over $200 million and staff of around 8,000 people. However, UNRWA's mandate, which focuses on assistance to refugees, does not extend to all Palestinians in the territories. There is special cognizance of this point within the West Bank, where fewer than half of the inhabitants are refugees. By contrast, the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is broader in focus, addressing issues of economic and social development throughout the occupied territories. However, its Programme, which was launched in 1980, is substantially smaller than that of UNRWA. For its part, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has the smallest programme, which also began operating in the territories in 1980.

5. With the implementation of the 4 May Cairo agreement, a new situation prevails on the ground, posing new challenges to the United Nations system. There is unanimity among the concerned parties, donors, international and regional institutions and non-governmental organizations, that, in the transitional phase, every effort must be made to assist the Palestinian authority in establishing its new administration and the institutions necessary to sustain it throughout the period of interim self-government. Of particular importance for the United Nations system will be cooperation with the Palestine Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), the recipient mechanism tasked with coordination and implementation of external assistance programmes and activities in the self-governing areas. However, for the reason indicated above, most United Nations agencies and programmes have had little or

no experience in dealing with the occupied territories, including Gaza and Jericho. Many are preparing to become active and have signed agreements with the PLO towards this end. This only strengthens the view of the Secretary-General, cited in his report (A/C.5/48/71) of 29 March 1994, that, in the light of the complexity and sensitivity of the situation in the region and the multiplicity of actors outside the United Nations system which will be involved during the transitional phase, it will be necessary to establish a specific mechanism to ensure effective coordination and intensification of United Nations assistance to the Palestinians in the occupied territories. In taking this decision, the Secretary-General is particularly conscious of paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 48/213 of 21 December 1993, in which the Assembly "calls upon relevant organizations and agencies of the United Nations system to intensify their assistance in response to the urgent needs of the Palestinian people, and to improve coordination through an appropriate mechanism under the auspices of the Secretary-General" (emphasis added).

6. Further, given the importance of this new undertaking and the need for an experienced person who could undertake consultations at the highest level with the parties concerned, donor countries and organizations of the United Nations system, the Secretary-General has concluded that this function should be performed at the under-secretary-general level and seeks the concurrence of the General Assembly therefor. In this connection it will be recalled that when this matter was considered by the Assembly in March, a number of delegations observed that the level of responsibilities to be entrusted to the Special Coordinator warranted an appointment at the under-secretary-general level.

7. The Special Coordinator will be stationed in the occupied territories, with a headquarters in Gaza, reporting directly to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

8. UNRWA, UNDP, UNICEF and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) have responded favourably in principle to assigning or seconding staff to the Special Coordinator, but have requested that the modalities should be worked out directly with him as he begins to assume his functions. It is also hoped that the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) may provide Field Service personnel to assist the Special Coordinator.

9. As indicated above, the Middle East peace negotiations are taking place outside the framework of the United Nations. This includes the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee on International Assistance to the Palestinians which, following the Conference to Support Middle East Peace on 1 October 1993, was established to coordinate international assistance for the development and reconstruction efforts of the Palestinian people on the donor side. The United Nations has been invited to be a member of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee.

10. Until the Special Coordinator has assumed his functions in full, it will not be possible to delineate authority with regard to the administration and/or coordination of available financial resources. In principle, it would remain the responsibility of UNRWA, UNDP and UNICEF respectively to administer the resources pledged to their ongoing programmes. However, the Special Coordinator will serve as the focal point in dealing with the donor community and will

maintain especially close contact with the World Bank. He will also maintain contact with relevant regional organizations and financial institutions.

11. It should also be recalled that the Special Coordinator, as requested by the parties, will carry out responsibilities that fall outside the sectoral briefs of the United Nations agencies and programmes. In the latter connection, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Yasser Arafat, in a letter to the Secretary-General dated 10 December 1993, requested that the United Nations assist with Palestinian police training. In response, the Secretariat, together with representatives of France, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, set up a training programme for future instructors of the Palestinian police force. The programme was submitted to the Palestine Liberation Organization in May 1994. Further development and implementation of the training programme will be handled by the Special Coordinator.

12. The Special Coordinator has already begun consultations with UNRWA, UNDP and UNICEF. He is also planning early contacts with other programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, in particular those which are about to launch new activities in the occupied territories. In addition to meeting with senior officials at the headquarters of those agencies, the Special Coordinator is undertaking a mission to the occupied territories to obtain first-hand information about the situation on the ground and the United Nations activities which are already under way, particularly in Gaza and Jericho, where Palestinian self-rule has been inaugurated. Meanwhile, the Special Coordinator had the opportunity to meet with senior officials of the concerned parties, co-sponsors of the peace process, donor countries and the World Bank when he led the United Nations delegation to the second Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting, held in Paris on 9 and 10 June 1994.

13. On 29 and 30 June 1994, the Secretary-General will convene an inter-agency meeting in order to ascertain what the United Nations system as a whole is prepared to contribute to the occupied territories in the light of the 4 May implementation agreement on Gaza and Jericho; to establish practical modalities to ensure a coherent and unified approach among those programmes and agencies which are presently operating, or will soon become active, on the ground; and to prepare for the development of a common strategy. The meeting will provide an occasion for the Special Coordinator to brief participants on his recent activities and plans for the immediate future. A principal objective of the meeting will be to agree on a mode of operations for cooperation among the United Nations programmes and agencies in the occupied territories.

14. In the light of experience gained by the Special Coordinator, a further report will be submitted at a later stage. It will also address the question of resource requirements for the Special Coordinator.